



Guide to Community Social Mapping

Developed by
**The Tékponon Jikuagou Project: Addressing Unmet Need for
Family Planning through Social Networks in Benin**



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Guide to Community Social Mapping

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WHAT IS COMMUNITY SOCIAL MAPPING? WHY ADD SOCIAL MAPPING TO YOUR PROJECT TOOLKIT?

The Tékponon Jikuagou (TJ) project responds to low rates of family planning uptake and increasing unmet need for family planning in Benin (DHS 2012), which exist despite multiple efforts to increase information and access. TJ seeks to address the concept of unmet need among women who want to limit or space their births but who are not using contraception by addressing social norms and barriers which influence non-use despite access to services.

The project uses social network analysis to identify the most influential and connected networks in a community and to assess the influence of men's and women's networks on fertility beliefs, attitudes, desires, intentions and behaviors relating to family planning. Interventions then work with key actors in individuals' social networks, as well as the network structures themselves to promote reflection on existing social norms, allowing people to recognize for themselves how norms and attitudes may negatively influence reproductive health and family planning. It also capitalizes on these networks to diffuse reflection on and consideration of different social norms and attitudes as they relate to family planning and fertility.

In this context, TJ developed a set of participatory learning exercises, collectively named the *Community Social Mapping Tool*, which would facilitate discussions with communities to learn about groups and formal and informal leaders in a village and to gain a general understanding of how a community is socially organized. The tool helps outsiders to understand which groups and individuals are most socially connected and respected – those influencing social networks and the spread of ideas and attitudes – to help make decisions about which groups and people with whom TJ could work. A core part of exercises in the tool involves an innovative variation of community mapping, which focuses on learning about community social dynamics and organization.

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY SOCIAL MAPPING EXERCISE

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The *Community Social Mapping Tool* is a set of exercises that are facilitated with community groups by project field agents to identify, list and select social groups and influential persons in communities to help the TJ team make the best decisions possible in terms of selecting two to three socially-influential groups and three to five socially-influential persons with whom to engage in project activities. Community social mapping is conducted in each village and involves meeting with community leaders to introduce the project and exercises, followed by several exercises to guide discussions and analysis with several groups in each village (that represent different viewpoints in each village). After the first meeting with village authorities, the exercises take several hours each day to conduct over a period of two days.

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Objective: Obtain the permission of administrative and local village authorities to begin discussions with the groups.

Approximate duration: One hour

STEP 1: Introduce yourself to the important village authorities (village leader, the sub-prefect, the mayor, etc.).

STEP 2: Explain the objective and strategies of TJ in putting the emphasis on community participation through the groups and influential individuals.

STEP 3: Talk about communication strategies for social mobilization (examples: town criers, village leader's advisors, religious leaders, and community groups).

STEP 4: Ask the village leader's permission to meet with community representatives with whom to meet and discuss (that is, with whom to do several exercises in the tool). Propose working with 8-10 people who can offer different perspectives, including men, women, older women, and older men. ("We would like to invite two men, two women, one to two



older women, and one to two older men to participate for several hours in a discussion.”) Explain that you would like also to work also with pre-established groups in the village for these discussions. If possible, invite the groups cited as well.

NB: Within the TJ project, there was a concern to ensure that socially marginalized group perspectives were represented. CARE and Plan worked to identify these groups, if they were not mentioned during the meeting with the village leader.

STEP 5: Set up a meeting with the community representatives and invited groups to complete Part II.

STEP 6: Record the questions and responses before thanking participants for their time and effort given.

The facilitator should create a summary of the discussion. Don't forget to note 1) the date of the meeting, 2) the name of the region, 3) the name of the village, 4) the name of the project facilitator, and 5) a brief description of the participants including the number of women, number of men, age group, and important characteristics of the people (example: leaders, head of the group, advisor, etc.). Further, the discussion reporter should write a summary of interesting points from the meeting and carefully list the names of influential people who were cited in the discussion.

PART II: LEARNING ABOUT INFLUENTIAL GROUPS - IDENTIFICATION, DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF VILLAGE GROUPS

Objective: Identify active groups with potential to maximize social networks with whom to start TJ activities within the community.

Approximate duration: One to two hours

Materials: A grid for each group (see grid example, below)

Participants: Community representatives identified in Part I, 8-10 invitees from community groups

STEP 1: Introduce yourself and the project, even if everyone knows about it already. Explain to the group that it will be very interesting to hear their ideas on existing groups within the community and to more fully understand how these groups are organized. This activity will help the project work better within the community.

STEP 2: Ask the participants to list active, existing groups within the community, for example: village associations, community work groups, agricultural cooperatives, women's groups, savings groups, microcredit groups, etc.

NB: If this exercise would work better in small groups, ask the participants to divide into two or three groups to complete the activity.

STEP 3: Explain to the group that you will use a grid to describe and compare the listed groups. Show the grid. Write the names of the different groups in the top row.

Example of a grid

	Group Description	Group 1 Name	Group 2 Name	Group 3 Name
1	Objective/activities			
2	Women, men, or mixed?			
3	Age of group members			
4	Group size			
5	Meeting frequency			
6.	Opinion: Level of group connectedness with others in village			
7.	Opinion: Level of influence in the general community			

STEP 4: After listing all of the groups, explain the following activity to complete the grids. For each group, ask the participants to mark with an X or to put a certain number of stones in the appropriate box to describe the group, e.g., age range, size, meeting frequency, connectivity, and level of influence of each group.

The facilitator with the support of one participant should guide them in using the legend:

Example of a rating system to describe group characteristics

Category	Low Rating	Middle Rating	High Rating
3-Age of group members	X (young) = majority are 18-25 years old	XX (adult) = majority are 26-50 years old	XXX (old) = majority are over 50 years old
4-Size	X = 2-10 people	XX = 11-30 people	XXX = more than 30 people
5-Meeting frequency	X = less than one activity per month	XX = one activity per month	XXX = more than one activity per month
6- Connectivity (membership of group members in other groups)	X = 0 members	XX = 1-10 members	XXX = 11 members and more

7- Level of influence in the general community (Influence: to be well known by the majority of the community, who involves many people in his/her activities, who can mobilize many people)	X= Not too influential with other groups	XX= Influential with other groups	XXX= Very influential with other groups
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STEP 5: Thank everyone for their participation. Ask if they have any questions. Explain that you will facilitate further discussions the following day with the people mentioned, groups mentioned, and further invitees if necessary.

At the end of the meeting, make sure that you have collected the information and labeled the grid with 1) the date of the meeting, 2) the name of the region, 3) the name of the village, 4) the name of the project facilitator, and 5) a brief description of the participants (number of women, number of men, age group, and important characteristics of the people [example: leaders, head of the group, advisor, etc.]). Further, the discussion reporter should write a summary of interesting points from the meeting and carefully list the names of influential people who were cited in the discussion.

PART III: UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY'S SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND SOCIALLY INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE VIA MAPPING

Objective: Explore how the community organizes itself socially with the help of a community map.

Approximate duration: 1-2 hours

Possible materials: Flip chart paper and markers, earthen surfaces and colored powder, Post-Its, pebbles, bits of crayons or colored pencil, stickers

Audience: People invited by the facilitators: community representatives from Part II and the persons listed in Part II. The day before, invite these 10-12 people who represent the perspectives of men, women, older women, older men, and marginalized groups (defined by situation).

STEP 1: Introduce yourself. Present the project. Explain how the project would like to understand the organization of the community in terms of social structures.

STEP 2: Ask the group to divide into two groups (by sex) to develop a map, using the materials provided. Maps might include the following elements:

- All of the village
- Roads
- Neighborhoods
- Important businesses
- Health centers
- Religious centers
- Community meeting places
- Group meeting places
- Important houses
- Points of reference
- Other divisions
- Other important buildings

STEP 3: After completing the maps, ask each group to look at all of the maps. Then, take each map one by one and encourage the participants to discuss them, asking on each map the following points:

- How is this community organized socially?
- Are there neighborhoods where richer and poorer people live? Where are they?
- Are there neighborhoods where people are more 'modern' or more 'traditional'? Where are they?
- What other differences exist between neighborhoods?
- Discuss the borders between these social differences – are they visible and non-visible? Are they flexible? How?

Next ask the women participants to name people in response to the following questions, and then ask the men. Note the names of people mentioned.

- Which people (men, women, elders, religious leaders, formal and informal leaders, etc.) can influence – through their words and actions – discussions with other people about important ideas in the community?
- Who influences community members' thoughts and the discussion about the well-being of a family?
- Who are the people who can influence the way that people discuss birth spacing and family planning?
- Why are these people influential?
- Where do they live?
- What is their role in the community?
- Do they interact with each other? How?

Continue by asking the following questions of the whole group:

- Do you have a lot of emigrants to Cotonou?
- Do they have influence over community members in terms of the use of family planning?
- If so, how do they influence people? Are they in a group?
- Are there community health workers in this village?
- Do they work in family planning?
- Do they belong to any organized groups?
- Are many people literate in this village (read, write)? For example, if we want to work with you with images accompanied with text, in which language would you prefer the text?



Figure 2. A group of women draws their village.



Figure 2. A group of men draws the same village.

STEP 4: Thank everyone for their participation and ask them if they liked or didn't like the activity. Ask and respond to supplementary questions about the exercise.

At the end of the meeting, make sure that you have collected the information and labeled the grid with 1) the date of the meeting, 2) the name of the region, 3) the name of the village, 4) the name of the project facilitator, and 5) a brief description of the participants (number of women, number of men, age group, and important characteristics of the people [example: leaders, head of the group, advisor, etc.]). NB: Take a photo of the maps, especially if you did them on the ground. Further, the discussion reporter should write a summary of interesting points from the meeting and carefully list the names of influential people who were cited in the discussion.

SELECTING GROUPS AND INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE WITH WHOM TO ENGAGE IN TJ ACTIVITIES

Overview: Once discussions with community members are completed, the project team needs to meet to identify which groups and people they will approach later to start TJ activities. Part I in this section guides the team in analyzing groups with great social diffusion and networking potential. Part II lays out the first meeting with selected groups, designed to validate the group characteristics and influence, and to identify one group member to be trained to use TJ reflective dialogue materials within the group. Part III lays out the process of selecting three to five influential people and organizing a first meeting with them, designed to validate their leadership roles and assess favorability of their attitudes toward child spacing and use of family planning.

Purpose: Moving from a listing activity to meetings with potential groups and influential persons with whom TJ will work.

Objectives:

- Choose influential groups that can be involved in project interventions.
- Understand how the group works, the attitudes and aptitudes of the members regarding family planning.
- Confirm the degree of influence and connectivity of the group within the community.
- Identify influential people who will be involved in project interventions



Possible materials: None

Participants: Selected groups and individuals who seemingly have social diffusion potential - connectivity and influence - in their community.

PART I: SELECTING GROUPS WITH WHOM THE PROJECT WOULD LIKE TO ENGAGE.

The community grid provides a comparative listing of different groups that exist in the village. To choose the *most* interesting groups with whom to work, apply the following order of criteria:

1. Influence → 2. Connectivity → 3. Meeting frequency → 4. Size of the group → 5. Age group

Compare groups of women amongst themselves and groups of men amongst themselves.

Figure 3. Example of a village analysis of influential groups. In this case, the *Mugnou ton* (adult group), and *Dougou koro benkad* (youth group) are most influential and would be selected

Part II: Group Selection			Group Leader's First and Last Name: _____ Date: _____				
Department: Health zone: Commune: Village: Number of participants: Men: Women:	Go all activities	Men, Women, Mixed	Members' age group	Group Size	Meeting frequency	Level of connectedness (between group members and other groups)	Level of influence in the general community
Selection Procedure							
			5	4	3	2	1
MUGNOU TON		F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
DANAYA	agriculture	F	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XXX
BENGADI KODALABOUGOU	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
SABOU GNOUMA	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XX	XXX	XXX
WASSOLO KIN	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
DOUGOU KORO BENKADI	agriculture	F	X	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
MEDINE 1	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
MEDINE 2	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	X
CHAUFFEUR MOUSSO TON	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
KOTOGNOKOTALA	agriculture	F	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX
	agriculture						
Legend:							
3-Members' age group X (young)= Majority 18-25 years old XX (adult)= Majority 26-50 years old XXX (old)= Majority 50+ years old	4-Group size X= 2-10 people XX= 11-30 people XXX= more than 30 people	5-Meeting frequency X= Less than 1 activity per month XX= 1 activity per month XXX= more than 1 activity per month	6-Level of Connectedness X= 0 members XX= 1-10 members XXX= 11+ members	7- Level of influence in the general community X= Not very influential in other groups XX= Influential in other groups XXX= Very influential in other groups			

STEP 1: IDENTIFY MOST INFLUENTIAL GROUPS

With the help of the selection grid, separate the most influential groups (with 3X). Among those groups, select the best connected.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY GROUPS THAT MEET FREQUENTLY

Next, amongst these groups, select those who meet most frequently. Amongst those groups, choose the ones with the most members.

STEP 3: MAKE FINAL SELECTIONS

Finally, select a group in the age group that interests you most.



In the case that you don't have the desired number of "very influential people" (those with 3Xs), you may start the same procedure with the 2X group of "influential people". In the case

that two groups seem to have the same level of influence, meet with each of the two groups in order to discern which is more influential (who can mobilize other people most effectively regarding health and leadership issues). In all cases, the facilitator should use his/her observations and knowledge of the community to make an objective choice.

PART II: MEETING THE GROUP LEADER AND GROUP MEMBERS TO SEEK THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN TJ ACTIVITIES AND TO IDENTIFY THE GROUP CATALYZER TO BE TRAINED TO USE TJ REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE MATERIALS.

Make sure to meet with the selected groups of women, men, youths, and with mixed groups (if mixed groups are influential) in their meeting places.

STEP 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Contact the president of each selected group in order to explain to him/her the purpose of the project and its expectations relating to the group. At the end of the discussion, set a time to meet with the members of the group.

STEP 2: DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

Begin by introducing yourself and talking about the project (the objectives, the expectations, etc.). Ask the group members to comment on the group activities, the objective, the size of the group, its community representative, meeting frequency, and the meeting place.

NB: Consider recording the keywords mentioned in group members' responses.

Ask the following questions:

- In many villages, the rate of infant and mother mortality is very elevated. Further, health workers note that the principal cause of their deaths is that births are too close together. What do you think of their observation?
- In your community, is it possible for a woman to space her births? If so, how? If not, what stops her from spacing her births?
- Does your group do activities to improve the health of mothers and their children in your community? If yes, what types of activities? If not, do you think you could?
- In your group, who are the most influential people? Amongst them, who has the capacity to mobilize group members and the community at large on the subject of maternal and child health?
- In your community, do you know one or multiple people who could have a great influence on the members of your community on this topic? Amongst them, who are the ones who have a positive attitude about this topic?

STEP 3: DETERMINE RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GROUPS

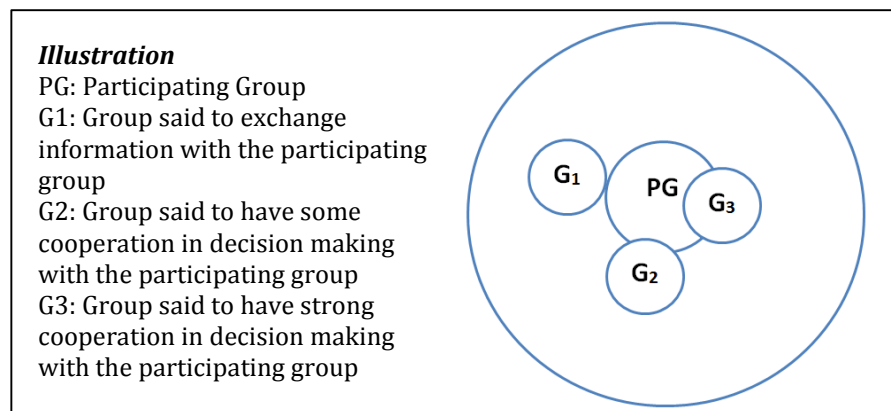
Procedure: Construct a Venn Diagram to establish relationships between groups.

Ask participants to cite the groups, associations, and institutions with whom they have a relationship.

Draw a large circle on flip chart paper or on the ground, and use a small circle in the middle of the larger one to represent the group that is present.

Finally, give the participating group other small circles that represent other groups in the community, and ask them to place them within the large circle using the following criteria:

- If there is information exchange between the groups, have them touch edges.
- If there is some cooperation in decision making between the two groups, slightly superimpose the circles.
- If there is strong cooperation in decision making, completely superimpose the two circles.



Ask for further examples of the type of information shared, decisions made, and who influences who between groups.

Also ask how they think they could get the majority of the community informed and mobilized on the importance of family planning.

NB: Before thanking the group for their participation, ask the participants if they would be interested in working with the TJ project and if they have any questions.

STEP 4: USE YOUR SKILLS OF OBSERVATION!

Facilitators should also observe each group that they meet. What additional information do these observations provide that gives clues to a group's influence and appropriateness for the project to engage them? The guide, below, should be completed after each group meeting.

Facilitator's Observation Guide – Meeting with Groups

	<i>Record your observations in this column.</i>
During the meeting, to what degree were you able to rally the members of the group around the topic?	
How did the discussion go within the group? (<i>Varied points of view? Respect amongst those with varying points of view? Etc.</i>)	
What did you observe about social cohesion within the group? Were there differences or opposition between members of the group during the discussion?	
Did the people mentioned within the group seem like informal leaders? Did you notice any other informal leaders?	
What did the dynamic of the group seem like in regard to the project's objectives?	

PART III: IDENTIFY AND SELECT INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN TJ ACTIVITIES

As with the groups, a selection process is needed to identify three to five influential people with whom to engage in TJ projects from the suggested names in the earlier phase of activities. Choose an average of five people amongst the names most cited during the community mapping activity (the meeting with the original representative group and the later groups of men, women, etc.) who were also noted as having a favorable attitude toward family planning. Go meet with them.

PART IV: MEETING WITH A COMMUNITY'S INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

STEP 1: Host the first meeting with a group of people most frequently cited as influential in earlier exercises.

Begin by introducing yourself and talking about the project (the objectives, the expectations, etc.). Ask about their main activity as a group, their roles within the community, and about their interactions with other members of the community. Ask the following questions:

- In many villages, the rate of infant and mother mortality is highly elevated. Further, health workers note that the principal cause of their deaths is that births are too close together. What do you think of their observation?
- In your community, is it possible for a woman to space her births? If so, how? If not, what stops her from spacing her births?
- How do you think you could convince the majority of the community of the importance of family planning?
- Do you have advice to help our project succeed in your community?

NB: Before thanking him/her for his/her participation, ask the participant if he/she would be interested in working with the project and if he/she has any questions.

STEP 2: Use your skills of observation!

Facilitators should also use this meeting to gain information through observation. What additional information do your observations provide that gives clues to each influential person's appropriateness for the project to engage them? The guide, below, should be completed after the meeting with influential people.

Facilitator's Observation Guide – Meeting with an Influential Person

	<i>Record your observations in this column</i>
What is this influential person's perception of family planning?	
To what degree did he/she seem motivated to work with this project?	
During your visit, what were the indicators of influence that you noticed? <i>(For example: many requests or questions during the interview, presence of other important members of the community near him/her, etc.)</i>	
Other important observations?	

PART V: VALIDATING YOUR CHOICES WITH PROJECT STAFF AND WITH THE COMMUNITY

The information-gathering phase is now complete. In the village, the team now has a good idea of groups and influential people with whom it will engage in TJ activities. One final step is important before making final decisions: talk with other project staff and people in the community about the groups and individuals with whom TJ wants to work and gauge their reaction. If it is favorable, the team has made good choices.